

Message Text

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ORIGIN EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 HUD-01 EB-07 DOTE-00 OES-07 NSC-05
SS-15 AID-05 CEA-01 CIAE-00 COME-00 EA-07 FRB-03
INR-07 IO-13 NEA-10 NSAE-00 USIA-06 OPIC-03 SP-02
TRSE-00 LAB-04 EPG-02 SIL-01 AGRE-00 OMB-01 EPA-01
INRE-00 /114 R

DRAFTED BY EUR/RPE:DHSWARTZ;S/P:SVOGELGESANG

APPROVED BY EUR/RPE:ACALBRECHT

HUD/OIA:THANCOCK

HUD/SEQ:RBROUN

DOT/TPI:RBRONEZ

DOT/UMTA:KORSKI

DOT/TAD:CTUCKER M

OES/ENP/EN:LGRANT

NSC:RHORMATS S/S-O:AWOTTO

DOMESTIC COUNCIL:KSCHMOKE

-----107558 190127Z /65

O R 190002Z JUL 77

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY PARIS IMMEDIATE

INFO ALL OECD CAPITALS

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USOECD; BRUSSELS ALSO FOR USEEC

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: OECD, EGEN, SENV

SUBJECT: U.S. OECD URBAN CONCERN INITIATIVE

1. SECRETARY VANCE STRESSED CONCERN FOR URBAN PROBLEMS
WITHIN ADVANCED INDUSTRIAL SOCIETY IN HIS SPEECH BEFORE THE
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OECD MINISTERIAL JUNE 23. HE SAID: "WE NEED TO UNDERSTAND
BETTER THE IMPACT FROM THE INTERACTION OF DOMESTIC AND
INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC TRENDS ON THE PLACE WHERE MOST OF
OUR CITIZENS LIVE." HE THEN PROPOSED ESTABLISHMENT OF AN
OECD AD HOC WORKING GROUP ON URBAN CONCERN TO PREPARE A
DRAFT ACTION PROGRAM FOR CONSIDERATION AT 1978 MINISTERIAL.

2. WE NOW WANT TO FOLLOW-UP ON THAT INITIATIVE WITH SOME SUGGESTIONS ON WHAT WE HOPE TO ACHIEVE FROM THE URBAN CONCERNS GROUP. OUR IDEAS FOLLOW IN PARAS 3-8 BELOW. MISSION SHOULD PUT THEM FORWARD AT JULY 22 COUNCIL MEETING AND SUGGEST THAT SECRETARIAT, AS FIRST STEP, MAY WISH TO CONVENE AN INITIAL MEETING OF URBAN EXPERTS IN SEPTEMBER OR OCTOBER. PRIOR TO JULY 22 COUNCIL MEETING, MISSION SHOULD ALSO, AS APPROPRIATE AND AT ITS DISCRETION, PRESENT OUR VIEWS INFORMALLY TO SECRETARIAT AND OTHER MISSIONS. YOU SHOULD SEEK THEIR SUPPORT AND REPORT PROMPTLY REACTIONS WHICH MIGHT BE RELEVANT TO POSSIBLE SUPPLEMENTAL INSTRUCTIONS FROM DEPARTMENT.

3. THE U.S. HOPES TO ACHIEVE BY THIS INITIATIVE AN INTEGRATED POLICY APPROACH TO THE PROBLEMS AFFECTING TEMPORARY URBAN LIFE. WE WANT TO GO BEYOND CURRENT OECD SPECIALIZED ACTIVITIES (MAINLY IN THE ENVIRONMENTAL FIELD) TO HIGHLIGHT IN CONCRETE POLICY TERMS USEFUL TO NATIONAL GOVERNMENTS, THE INTERACTION AND TRADE-OFFS WHICH EXIST AMONG KEY URBAN ISSUES. FURTHER, AS THE SECRETARY SUGGESTED, WE SHOULD RELATE QUESTIONS OF URBAN POLICY TO THE LARGER MACROECONOMIC SETTING--SUCH AS THE STATE OF OVERALL AND MEMBER-STATE ECONOMIC RECOVERY AND THE RANGE OF ONGOING OECD ACTIVITIES IN ECONOMIC POLICY COORDINATION. ASSESSMENT OF IMPLICATIONS BASED ON VARIOUS SETS OF LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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ECONOMIC ASSUMPTIONS MAY OFFER AN AVENUE FOR INCLUDING THIS DIMENSION IN THE OVERALL URBAN PROGRAM.

4. WE BELIEVE THAT WORK ON URBAN CONCERN CAN SUCCEED BEST IF THE OECD CONCENTRATES ON A FEW KEY ISSUES. THE FOLLOWING ARE AMONG THOSE WHICH ARE IMPORTANT IN THEIR OWN RIGHT AND WHICH RELATE TO EACH OTHER AND LARGER ECONOMIC POLICY QUESTIONS:

--URBAN TRANSPORTATION NEEDS (INCLUDING PROBLEMS OF GOODS MOVEMENT AND AUTOMOBILE USE IN CITY CENTERS);

--ENERGY (INCLUDING, INTER ALIA, CONSERVATION, WASTE RECYCLING AND DEVELOPMENT OF NEW FORMS);

--ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY AND LAND USE PLANNING;

--TAXATION POLICIES (INCLUDING FINANCING URBAN PUBLIC SERVICES);

--UNEMPLOYMENT (PARTICULARLY THE PROBLEMS OF YOUTH);

--PUBLIC SAFETY; AND

--HOUSING AND NEIGHBORHOOD PRESERVATION.

5. MAJOR STRESS SHOULD BE GIVEN TO THE POLICY IMPLICATIONS OF THE INTERACTION AMONG SUCH URBAN CONCERNS. THE END RESULT SHOULD ENHANCE THE ABILITY OF OECD GOVERNMENTS TO ASSIST NATIONAL AND OTHER GOVERNMENTAL AUTHORITIES CONCERNED WITH URBAN PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT. FOR EXAMPLE, ENERGY CONSERVATION REQUIREMENTS MAY CALL FOR STRONGER MEASURES IN FAVOR OF PUBLIC TRANSPORT AND ENERGY-EFFICIENT HOUSING. ADDITIONALLY, POLICIES TO OVERCOME UNEMPLOYMENT AND REDUCE CRIME MAY HAVE IMPLICATIONS IN THE ORGANIZATION

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AND OPERATION OF PUBLIC TRANSPORT SYSTEMS. THE AIM OF SUCH AN INTEGRATED, POLICY-ORIENTED APPROACH SHOULD BE TO IMPROVE THE CAPACITY OF OECD GOVERNMENTS TO HELP THEIR URBAN CITIZENS--DIRECTLY, TANGIBLY, QUICKLY. THE STATE OF THE MODERN INDUSTRIAL CITY REFLECTS THE MORE GENERAL STATE OF INDUSTRIAL SOCIETY AND VICE VERSA. THERE ARE VITAL ECONOMIC, SOCIAL, AND POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS TO HAVING CITIES WITHIN THE OECD AREA WORK WELL.

6. WE WOULD EXPECT THAT THE AD HOC WORKING GROUP ON URBAN CONCERNS SHOULD PREPARE A REPORT FOR THE 1978 MINISTERIAL WHICH WOULD ASSESS THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE OECD IN ADDRESSING THE MAJOR URBAN CONCERNS OF MEMBER STATES AND SUGGEST RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MAKING THE ORGANIZATION A MORE EFFECTIVE INSTRUMENT OF INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION ON URBAN ISSUES. WE CAN BEGIN NOW WITH A PROGRAM WHICH MIGHT INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING STEPS (WITH THOSE RESPONSIBLE FOR PREPARATION IN PARENTHESES):

(A) A REVIEW OF THE MAJOR URBAN CONCERNS AND PRIORITIES OF THE MEMBER COUNTRIES AND THE POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND TRADE OFFS THEY PERCEIVE, TOGETHER WITH SUGGESTIONS FOR OECD WORK IN THE URBAN FIELD (STATEMENTS BY MEMBER GOVERNMENTS);

(B) AN INVENTORY OF CURRENT OECD ACTIVITIES RELEVANT TO URBAN CONCERNS (SECRETARIAT), WITH SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT, BETTER COORDINATION, AND ADDITIONAL WORK (AD HOC WORKING GROUP);

(C) A BRIEF SURVEY OF THE URBAN-RELATED WORK OF MAJOR INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS, SUCH AS THE ECE, NATO/CCMS, THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY, AND THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE TO

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AVOID UNNECESSARY DUPLICATION (SECRETARIAT); AND

(D) DEVELOPMENT OF POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS AND OPTIONS FOR FUTURE OECD WORK PROGRAMS, POSSIBLY INCLUDING A POLICY STATEMENT OF OECD'S URBAN OBJECTIVES (AD HOC WORKING GROUP).

7. AS WORK PROCEEDS, THE AD HOC WORKING GROUP MIGHT FIND IT USEFUL TO UNDERTAKE A FEW SPECIFIC, CLOSELY-DEFINED, SHORT-TERM PROJECTS TO ILLUSTRATE THE ISSUES UNDER CONSIDERATION BY EXPLORING THE INTERACTION IN TWO OR MORE OF THE FIELDS NOTED ABOVE. SUCH PROJECTS COULD BE OPEN TO ALL MEMBERS ON AN "AS-INTERESTED" BASIS AND COULD BE HANDLED BY MAKING ASSIGNMENTS TO APPROPRIATE EXISTING OECD COMMITTEES WITH URBAN-RELATED INTERESTS, E. G. ENVIRON-

MENT, ECONOMIC POLICY (WPS), AGRICULTURE (WP3), INDUSTRY (WP6), SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL POLICY (URBAN PANEL), SOCIAL AFFAIRS, AND THE ROAD RESEARCH PROGRAM.

8. IN PRESENTING THESE IDEAS AT THE JULY 22 COUNCIL MEETING, MISSION SHOULD SAY THAT THE U.S. STATEMENT (AS SUGGESTED IN 6A ABOVE) WILL BE CIRCULATED IN THE NEAR FUTURE. U.S. REP SHOULD STRESS THAT WE SEEK AN EARLY ORGANIZATIONAL EXPERTS MEETING, AS INDICATED ABOVE, AT WHICH OUR STATEMENT AND THOSE OF OTHER COUNTRIES, TOGETHER WITH SECRETARIAT SUGGESTIONS, COULD BE SYNTHESIZED INTO A WORKABLE ACTION PROGRAM FOR THE COMING YEAR. WE BELIEVE THE SECRETARIAT COULD UNDERTAKE THE STEPS SUGGESTED ABOVE FOR IT AND HAVE THEM READY FOR THE EXPERTS MEETING. U.S. REP SHOULD STRESS OUR DESIRE TO HAVE CONCRETE RECOMMENDATIONS AVAILABLE FOR CONSIDERATION BY NEXT YEAR'S MINISTERIAL. U.S. REP SHOULD ALSO POINT OUT THAT WE WOULD WELCOME PROPOSALS BY THE SECRETARY GENERAL ON HOW TO PROCEED WITH THE FOREGOING SUGGESTIONS.

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9. WE WOULD WELCOME MISSION'S SUGGESTIONS ON INSTITUTIONAL STEPS FOR CARRYING OUT THIS INITIATIVE AND IDEAS FOR APPROPRIATE PARTICIPATION IN THE AD HOC GROUP, BASED ON INFORMAL SOUNDINGS WITH OTHER DELEGATIONS, THE SECRETARIAT, AND DISCUSSIONS AT THE JULY 22 COUNCIL MEETING. DEPARTMENT WILL ALSO BE INTERESTED IN LEARNING WHAT, IF ANY THINKING DEVELOPS WITHIN SECRETARIAT AS TO FUNDING OF PROPOSED WORK-

ING GROUP ACTIVITIES. WE WISH TO AVOID DILUTION OR
WEAKENING OF EXISTING ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE PROGRAMS. VANCE

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptoning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS, ECONOMIC TRENDS, URBAN DEVELOPMENT
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 19-Jul-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977STATE167584
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: DHSWARTZ;S/P:SVOGELGESANG
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770267-0949
Format: TEL
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770742/aaaabkez.tel
Line Count: 226
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: c05e9a67-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ORIGIN EUR
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 5
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 03-Mar-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1817179
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: U.S. OECD URBAN CONCERNS INITIATIVE
TAGS: EGEN, SENV, OECD
To: PARIS EEC
Type: TE
vdkvgwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/c05e9a67-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009